3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

In the preparation of food, meat was generally cooked by holding 252
it on a stick over a fire. Sometimes it was roasted on hot coals and the burned portion removed before eating. It was served on the flesh side of a dried skin, or sometimes the stick was brought into the tent and the handle end stuck into the ground with a long piece of meat dangling from the other end. The women got copper or iron pots as soon as possible from the traders and thereafter boiled or stewed most of their meat. They had always stewed some meat in the buffalo paunch, heating it by immersing hot stones in the water, since a fire could not be built directly under the paunch. After they obtained metal pots, the large kettle was placed over a fire and all sorts of meats and cuts dumped into it. The contents were stirred at intervals with the broad rib of a buffalo. Hunks of meat were fished from the sloppy stew with the stirring stick, knife, or the hands. The iron pot released women from a lot of labor, but it certainly added nothing to the flavor, sanitation, or dignity of the meal. During the later period [263] a few people dipped their meat into a salt brine as they ate it. Generally, however, no salt was used on the meat, either for curing or when eating.[7] A sauce made from honey, water, and tallow was frequently used over roasted meat. The Comanches were fond of tripe. [262] When it was not consumed raw, the usual method was to clean it and then roast it over hot coals.[8] Terrapins and turtles were collected in sacks and thrown while alive into a crackling fire. Those which sought to escape were thrown back until they roasted, when they were raked from the fire, their shells broken open, and the contents eaten with a horn spoon.[9]

Captain R. G. Carter, whose military life brought him into contact with the Comanches, described their cooking of fish and turkey:

> In cooking fish, they enclose them in clay or mud after they have been "drawn" and cleaned, to a depth of several inches, rolling them over, and the hot coals scraped on top. When cooked the hard baked clay is knocked off with the casing, and the fish eaten with salt.
>
> A wild turkey was bled, dressed or "drawn," a few feathers

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*; Smithwick, *op. cit.*, 178–79; Parker, *op. cit.*, 196.

[9] C. and J. D. Smith, *op. cit.*, 66; Thomas C. Battey, *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker among the Indians*, 95, 323; Rister, *Border Captives*, 18–19.

The Comanches

222 like wild onions, radishes, and Jerusalem artichoke were also exploited—nor was the bulb of the sego lily overlooked.

A truly favorite sweet dish for the Comanche was a mush made [262] of buffalo marrow mixed with crushed mesquite beans, which are very high in sugar content.

262 439 Dried pumpkins, pumpkin seeds, and corn were obtained in trade from the Kiowas, Wichitas, and other tribes to the east. Corn was not really used very much, although the Comanches did like to make a drink of boiled corn meal sweetened with mesquite. If they had let this concoction ferment, as did the Gila River tribes of Arizona, they could have had an alcoholic mead, but the Comanches did not know how to brew beer or ferment wines from their grapes.

[276] Tobacco was obtained in trade with the Mexicans and not grown at all.

263 Honey added flavor to the Comanche diet. So highly in favor was it that one band received the name *Penatɜkə* or Honey-eaters. The honey bee seems to have been abundant along the Cross Timbers of the eastern Comanchería. Honey was bagged in skin containers and could be kept indefinitely.

251 The original K-ration was pemmican, beloved of the Comanches and many other tribes of Indians. Wild berries, cherries, or plums, pounded well and partially dried in the sun, or walnuts, piñons, or pecans gave flavor to the dried meat, which was pounded thoroughly, softened over a fire, and then mixed with the pounded fruit or nuts. Tallow and marrow fat were added, and the mixture was stored either in parfleche bags (ɔyɔ:t), in large intestines which probably had been no more than partially cleaned, or in paunches. Before the container was firmly tied, melted tallow was sometimes poured over the whole to make it air tight. In either container, the pemmican with proper care would keep for years. It was greatly prized by the whites, particularly when sliced and dipped in honey. They called it "Indian bread," for since the Comanches had no bread, this was the nearest substitute. Children went about eating it as American children eat candy. When other foods were available, dried meat and pemmican were saved for times of food scarcity.

264 It was generally believed by the whites that the Comanches had no regular times for meals, that they ate at all hours of the day or

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
NO6 Comanche NO6

824 *tuberosus*), but some other plant might fit the description equally well.
262 Hoebel (10) records three Shoshone food plants the names of which suggest a relationship to the Comanche *paiyap*. The first of these (Shoshone: *yep* or *muhaiyep*) has a single "root," grows in the hills, and is harvested in early March. The second (Shoshone: *ṭimbiyep*, that is, "rock *yep*") grows in rocky outcrops. It is of interest to note here that Chamberlain (6, p. 46) gives the Gosiute term *tim-bo-ip* (rock + root + plant) for plants growing over rocks. The third has the Shoshone name *piayep*, meaning "big *yep*," which appears to be the Shoshone equivalent of the Comanche *paiyap;* it is described as having several large tubers.

824 The pod of the mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) contains a con-
252 siderable amount of gummy saccharine material, of which a number
263 of analyses have been made. One of the more recent shows the beans to contain about twenty per cent sugar (28, p. 656). The Comanche
[415] crushed them in a mortar made of buffalo hide, using a pestle of mesquite wood. After the beans were crushed, the seeds were removed and the pods pounded to a fine meal, which was used alone or added to corn meal as a sweetening. A mush was prepared by
[272] mixing mesquite meal with marrow, and a drink (Comanche: *pihi-sawanap*) was made by combining mesquite meal and corn meal in water. Whether or not this drink was allowed to ferment is not mentioned in the notes. The Comanche preparation and uses of
[170] the mesquite beans are almost identical with those of the Apache and the tribes of the Gila region of Arizona (3, pp. 43–44; 4, pp. 41, 53), where the mesquite was a staple food. Among these tribes a fermented beverage was prepared from the mesquite alone or from a mixture of mesquite and corn meal.

824 In times of scarcity the acorns of the blackjack oak (*Quercus*
261 *marilandica*) were eaten. They were shelled and boiled, and might
171 be stored for future use. The Comanche, unlike many other tribes, did not grind them into meal, but ate them whole. Castetter (3, p. 47) reports that certain of the Pueblos also boiled the kernels whole. Acorns were widely used as food by various tribes, particularly in the Southwest, the Southeast, and California, and among some Indians in the latter region they were the major food staple.

The roots of several plants were eaten or chewed merely for their flavor. These seem to have been chiefly in the nature of famine foods and food supplements rather than staples. The roots of a

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

[ca. 1818]

175 262 imagine, these beef chips are neither very palatable nor alimental after this operation; but they are still meat, and meat is always desirable to a carniverous savage. The beneficient author of nature has given them an inexhaustible 175 317 supply of salt. They procure this excellent fossil from a saline near the sources of the Rio Brazos, where it is indurated by natural evaporation, into masses of different dimensions. When pulverized, it is of a beautiful whiteness, not 175 inferior to our best table salt. But owing to their roving habits, the Indians are frequently destitute of this healthful 263 and savoury ingredient in animal food, and eat their meat for months together without seasoning of any kind. They do not consider this privation as a very serious matter.

175 262 They make a kind of bread of the pods of the locust tree, which grows abundantly throughout their range. These pods possess a small portion of sacchrine matter which renders the meal cohesive and gives it an agreeable though somewhat insipid taste; but in substance it is about as edible as saw-dust, which it resembles in appearance. The Peccan tree grows luxuriantly on all their water courses, and the delightful nut it affords, together with black and red hawes, prickly-pear apples, and some other spontaneous fruits, and a few excellent roots, eke out the scanty subsistence of these people, during the absence of their favorite Buffaloes.

175 22 [439] [261] Some of the lower or southern villages make an annual visit to the Whacoes (a small tribe located on the Brazos) and traffic horses for beans, melons, and corn. But owing to their frequent migrations, they are not able to transport a permanent stock of these articles; and very soon after returning from the corn feast of their more provident neighbours, they relapse into their habitual alternations of feast or famine.

175 165 [164] But Providence seems to have provided them with some natural indemnities against the physical evils that might be supposed incidental to their irregular and versatile manner of life. Notwithstanding their frequent and painful privations, they are subject to few diseases, and exhibit many instances of remarkable longevity. Men, whose furrowed

Mountains. But these collections form a very small part of the food necessary to sustain life.

The animals killed in the chase are skinned, cut up, and brought to camp by the women, who follow the hunters for that purpose. The whole of the carcass is utilized. The entrails are regarded as appetizing morsels. They rarely use any condiment with their meat. When brought home, the women kindle fires and proceed to partly roast the choice pieces for their lords. The poorest pieces of flesh they may be permitted to reserve for themselves.

The Comanches are expert horsemen and skillful archers. The iron-tipped arrow impelled from a Comanche's *bois d'arc* bow, is a dangerous missile. They easily send it through an inch board; and I have seen the rib of an old bullock shattered by one of those arrows.

Among them, the women are the most abject slaves. The men do nothing, except to follow the chase, go on the war-path, or decorate themselves with feathers and paint. Even this last operation conducive to manly vanity, sometimes falls to the task of the female slaves of the lodge. The slaughtered animals on the plains are brought in by them; the skins are dressed by women, fuel is collected; the herds of ponies are watched; plumes are made, the paint bags are kept in order; the tents or lodges are erected; food is prepared; and, if after performing all these services the Comanche lady finds time heavy on her hands, she is made to minister to the pleasure of her sovereign lord by adorning his buckskin leggings with delicate splotches of paint, and graceful tufts of feather plucked from the prairie eagle; to streak his face with vermillion, yellow ochre, and charcoal, until he appears in all the glory of a full fledged dandy, and then he saunters forth to exhibit his charms to the susceptible maidens of his tribe. The wife, or the daughter, must, at least apparently, be delighted at the magnificent "make up" of the dandy husband or father. Theirs is not the privilege to complain.

Among the Comanches, all women occupy the position of slaves. The daughter is the slave to the father; the wife to the husband, and if there are any who do not occupy the relationship of daughter or wife, they are slaves to some male relative, or to the tribe. The father sells his daughter in marriage, and the husband may sell his wife for a pony, a shining piece of silver, or a handful of beads.

The women can form no ties, make no bargain, and exercise no choice in social or domestic relations. The father selects a husband for his daughter, exacts a consideration, if she proves agreeable to the chosen son-in-law, and consigns her to him, to do with her as he will. She becomes his slave,